

USPS Report on PRC Rate and Service Inquiries for August 2009

The Postal Regulatory Commission referred 59 inquiries to the Postal Service in August. Customers received responses on average within 16 days.

Inquiries covered various topics that fell into three main categories:

- Delivery services (26) – i.e., the time of delivery, forwarding, and method of delivery.
- Customer services (5) – i.e., hours of service, availability of retail products, and product tracking.
- Policies/procedures (28) – i.e., privacy and Freedom of Information Act requests, obtaining refunds or exchanging postage, and suggestions.

While many of the inquiries were customer specific, the following topics are being highlighted for their possible interest to a larger audience.

Post Office Station and Branch Consolidations – In an effort to streamline its retail network across the country, the Postal Service is currently evaluating cost saving measures which include the consolidation of Post Office station and branch locations. They are focusing on areas where there are a number of offices in close proximity to determine where consolidations are possible, while maintaining customer access to postal services. The offices being studied are subordinate stations and branches and are managed by a Station Manager, who reports to the Postmaster of the Main Post Office in that service area. You may learn more about this topic by visiting the Postal Service Web site at http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2009/pr09_074.htm.

Addressing – The Postal Service does not assign addresses to new locations. Assigning addresses is a function that is controlled by local city or county zoning and planning offices. Local government officials work with the Postal Service to conform to postal addressing standards. Customers should contact their local city or county officials to obtain an address for a new location.

The Postal Service does assign ZIP Codes. The ZIP Code system was created and designed to provide an efficient postal distribution and delivery network. ZIP Code assignments are, therefore, closely linked to factors such as mail volume, delivery area size, geographic location, and topography, but not necessarily to municipal or perceived community boundaries. The general stability of boundaries is essential to prompt and accurate distribution of mail. However, delivery growth and changing demographics can necessitate adjustments to ZIP Code boundaries in order to achieve Postal Service objectives. The Postal Service will add new or realign existing ZIP Code areas to accommodate population growth and operational needs. New ZIP Codes are announced publicly by the District Office approximately thirty (30) days before the ZIP Code change goes into effect.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – General information about the Postal Service is readily available on the Postal Service Web site at <http://faq.usps.com>. This page is also accessible by clicking on the CUSTOMER SERVICE link at the top right of the usps.com home page. From the FAQ page, you may start by choosing one of six general categories of information to explore a wide variety of topics and sub-topics. On the right is a list of Hot Topics and the most frequently searched Top 10 FAQs. You may also type your question or topic into the Search box to begin your search on an individual topic. If the information is not found, simply click on the Email Us or Call Us links at the top of the page to request further assistance from the Postal Service.